

# AJO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 15

## Governing Board Members:

Mrs. Marcia Duncan  
President  
Mr. Eric Krznarich  
Clerk  
Ms. Lonnie Guthrie  
Member  
Mrs. Windy Robertson  
Member  
Mr. Rodney Hopkins  
Member

## Administration:

Dr. Robert F. Dooley  
Superintendent  
Mr. Leonard Edlund  
Principal  
Ms. LeAnn Burns, CPA  
Business Manager  
Ms. Marichou Beltran  
Special Ed. Director

## MINUTES

### REGULAR SESSION BOARD MEETING

Ajo Unified School District Board Room #23, 5:30 p.m.  
March 10, 2021

#### 1. Call to Order at 5:30 p.m.

- a. Statement of Welcome

#### 2. Roll Call

Present	-	Marcia Duncan, President
Present – Phone	-	Eric Krznarich, Clerk
Present	-	Lonnie Guthrie, Member
Present	-	Rodney Hopkins, Member
Present	-	Windy Robertson, Member
Present	-	Robert Dooley, Superintendent
Present	-	Leonard Edlund, Principal
Absent	-	LeAnn Burns, Business Manager

- b. Appointment of Acting Clerk, Mr. Rodney Hopkins

#### 3. Adoption of the Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins, and seconded by Mrs. Robertson, that the Governing Board adopt the agenda as presented. The vote to approve the agenda passed 5-0.

#### 4. Pledge of Allegiance

#### 5. Visitor's Comments

Visitors are welcome to speak on agenda and non-agenda items. Comments are limited to 3 minutes. Please state your name and address prior to making your comments. Please note that members of the Board may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, action taken is limited to directing the administration to look into the matter, responding to any criticism, or scheduling the matter for future consideration. (A.R.S. §38-431.01(H))

**Michael Robertson 541 Hospital Hill** - So let's acknowledge what will happen, Dr. Dooley will come up with a plan to cut \$250,000 (from the budget) he must cut. He knows it's going to be horrific; we all do. And you will go and vote along with his plan without acknowledging how really bad things are for the school but knowing you have done your job as a board. No. Doing your job as a board means holding Dr. Dooley and the administration's feet to the fire, in this time of crisis, because you hired him. At the Monday meeting Dr. Dooley repeatedly said the administration was hoping for reenrollment, hoping for increased enrollment. Hoping, he used the word a half a dozen times, yet not one board member bothered to ask him what he plans to do or is planning to do besides hoping. Ms. Burns told you Mr. K.C. and his staff did a comprehensive analysis and determined that 50% of the parents who have unenrolled

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their students are unlikely to re-enroll them. But did that analysis determined why parents were choosing not to enroll their kids? I don't know the answer, and neither do you because nobody on this board asked the question. It matters because if you know why and, the administration knew why, then something could be done.

In the last meeting, Mr. Guthrie asked about the high rate of attrition in custodial staff. But what this board should be asking for exit interviews, but you don't, so you don't know why staff is leaving, you don't know why teachers are leaving. I think attrition is unacceptably high in this district, I think our students deserve as much continuity as is possible. This board should be doing more to learn from this administration what changes should be made to help that happen. Real leadership of this district would have leveraged Ajo's uniqueness and small size to mitigate the problem we are facing. Dr. Dooley does not do this. In a baseless vote the board voted to extend his contract to maintain business as usual. Our kids and teachers deserve better. None of you are paid to be sitting up here, giving your time, and that's appreciated but you signed up to serve your community. Please meet and talk as a body to determine what information you should have that you don't have, come up with a plan to acquire the information you don't have, and demand accountability because that's what functioning affected boards do. Coming here once a month to vote on items put before you is not enough. You are a governing body, and if there is ever a time to govern, it's not.

**Mrs. Duncan:** Now on the back of the visitor's comments it says "Personal attacks upon Board members, staff personnel, or other persons are discouraged. Upon conclusion of the open call to the public, individual members of the Board may respond to any criticism made by an individual who has addressed the Board." Mr. Hopkins, I request that I have 3 minutes in response. Mr. Robinson and I am including Mrs. Robinson because although, your speech is your speech, things go right along with it. Monday night, and I am paraphrasing, you said that you and Mrs. Robinson had explored places to settle, and one of the main requirements was a good school district. After being here for a while you came to realize that Ajo schools did not measure up to your expectations. Is this correct? I'm speaking in defense of the school, the board, the staff, and all the children that attend. We are not perfect; no school is but we have open to suggestions that will make us a better school. I am saying this is my own opinion though I hope upon hearing that some of the board members will agree with me. Being negative at times, bordering on slanderous, does not make a good school district. Recalls, do not make a good school district. Nasty letters do not make a good school district. Constantly finding fault does not make a good school district. I believe the primary goal of any school district is to provide the children of that district with the best environment and tools for learning how does all this negativity look to our students? Staff works hard to instill kindness honesty and positivity into them. What kind of examples are we to them and the children of Ajo, arguing all the time? I challenge you, Mr. Robertson, come back again and speak to us again both you and Mrs. Robinson. at what have the ability to make positive changes. What are your ideas that will help you learn and further the education of all students? We need to work together on common goals. What you are doing now does not do that. So, I look forward to hearing from you again soon Marsha

**Mr. Guthrie:** I would like to respond also, I'm sorry, Mrs. Duncan. Monday when we had our meeting, we did ask the question, what was the plan to address the shortfall a budget, and Dr. Dooley assured us that he would have a plan for us, next month at our board meeting. So it's not like we don't, like we're not interested in what happens here. We are just giving the administration the chance to present to do in order to address the budget deficit. It's a very difficult time for everybody right? As I said Monday, at one time Ajo Ambulance was losing \$80,000 a month, because of COVID, right? So, every business in town, and probably your magazine also everybody is having to adjust the lower budgets and so it's just a tough time. So, it's not like we are blatantly letting it go, we are working to try to right the ship right?

**Mrs. Duncan:** [Now I am changing the agenda just a bit. I am moving item 8.b.2, which is last on the agenda and moving it up in front of the Informational Items.](#)

## **8.b.2. Approval of Scholarship Donation – Estate of John Byrnes**

Mr. John Byrnes, former teacher and board member, passed away on December 21, 2019. Mr. Byrnes requested that part of his estate be donated to the Ajo Unified School District to be used in a scholarship account to benefit future graduates of the Ajo High School. The executor of his estate, Mr. Ken Farmer will present this gift of scholarship funds to the Board.

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Mr. Farmer: And I am executive official for John Byrnes and am here to fulfill my fellow teachers and friend's last wishes. John came here in 1975 and retired in 2005. He taught business and computer science, he was a student council sponsor for 20 years, and coach Golf, very poorly, He and I were score keepers for football until I became an official. He was a school board member for many years, and I would like to read from you from his will, his last will and testament. My residential home and the lot there under shall be sold, and the proceeds shall go to a scholarship fund for the Ajo High School students, specifically for those students going to a business school, to be administered by my friends Ken Farmer and Daisy Farmer. So the home has been sold, and I would like to present to the board a check for \$133,000 for the John Byrnes Memorial Scholarship.

Mrs. Duncan made the motion to approve the donation made by Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Farmer in the amount of \$133,000. Mr. Guthrie seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

## 6. Information Items

### a. Governing Board Report

No governing board members wished to give a report.

### b. Superintendent's Report

Thank you, madam president, and thank you again to Mr. Farmer, we wish Mr. Brynes was around to receive these accolades. Just to keep you a breast items coming up on the calendar. Parent/teacher conferences are coming up for our school district next week 17th 18th and 19th. This is our second set of parent conferences this year, they are different than what we are used to. 99% of this is on Zoom or telephone or something to that effect. We still expect the good turn out, we want teachers, as part of the 301 plan. They'll have their students involved in parent conferences. We think it's important.

We hear about frustration kids and parents are having due to the shut down because of COVID-19. The students aren't producing well, we all know that. I will say this over and over again this is not unique to Ajo high school, Ajo elementary school, or Ajo students. This is happening nationwide and it's unfortunate, but we want parents to be aware, as much as they can. But also, be aware that we can perhaps help students with certain programs we have during spring break and summer session.

Fourth quarter starts Monday, time flies when you're having fun. Spring break will be the 22nd to the 26th, we have an item on the agenda tonight to hire teachers to help us with programs to help students who may need some extra help or may need to play catch up. One of the things I'm always worried about, is right now nationwide, we are seeing a bit of a COVID plateau. That means the numbers have dropped since January. I've heard two figures, between 60 and 70,000 per day and 50 and 70,000 a day so my worry is this for our country that even though we're hitting a plateau the plateau is still much higher than it was last March April May and June and maybe July. So we've got to be cautious and keep social distancing and keep being safe. Its not just me, worried about that doctors, that I trust in the news like Anthony Faucy, he talks about the fact that he's worried that we are on the verge of another surge. He's thinking about spring break, and that's what I'm worried about.

Today Mr. Edlund and I modeled our expectations for teachers for reopening. On how we want them to distribute hand sanitizer, take temperatures, clean surfaces, and so forth we spend an hour to an hour and 15 minutes talking about what we expect, what we think is safe for children and staff, and responding to questions. It was frustrating, I said this 100 times before I'm sorry repeat myself but none of us educators are experts on COVID-19. I learn a million times more than what I knew a year ago today because reading articles, watching the news, looking on the Internet. We

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were trained to help kids become readers and writers and learn how to get along during stressful times. We are not trained COVID experts and so we had to learn a lot of this stuff. So that's part of the frustration I think that you'll hear from all educators in our business. I have a daughter, that I love dearly, who teaches in Las Vegas, and I have to remind her, honey this is the way it's going to be. Because she's so frustrated because she can't have kids, she sometimes she can be on campus. So it is something we are all having to learned to deal with it. Just because the Board voted last month to open up for 29th, I appreciate the fact, sincerely that the board pushed it back that far. Mr. Edlund and I worried about staffing the second code shot it wouldn't have time to take effect. I think that I think that there's ample time we're also worried about the fact that we may see some issues with spring break we didn't want to start in the spring break and start again so I appreciate the board picking the 29th. I think that was a reasonable choice just because I am worried, and that Mr. Edlund is worried about having kids that doesn't mean we don't want around. The best part of my day, you all know Rona Cotay, she's the PreK teacher, and I was in the primary campus doing something and I was coming back. And suddenly I see these 7 little 3-5-year-old coming and they are all excited because they have new masks. And the masks came from Az School for the Deaf and the Blind and they had a clear plastic inserts so she can see her lips move they develop language skills. But that was the best part of the day until right now I'm sure this will move that out of the way. That is that's what we want to see, we want to see these kids back, but we also want to see them at the end of the year healthy. Word was sent Monday that Ajo Schools is supporting the governors executive order, to start the 15th or the Monday after spring break. We are trying to comply as best we can. One of the things that was talked about with staff today was we don't know how to fix problems unless you tell us there is a problem. We think what we are planning is going to work, but it's going to be some trial and error I'm sure.

## **7. Consent Agenda**

The following items are being recommended for approval on the consent agenda:

- a. Financial Report
- b. Voucher Approval
- c. Board Minutes
- d. Donations
- e. Library Report
- f. Monthly Contact Report

It was moved by Mrs. Robertson and seconded by Mrs. Duncan that the Governing Board adopt the agenda as presented. The motioned passed 5-0.

## **8. Board Action Items**

### **a. Personnel**

#### **1. Administrative Resignation – 2021/2022 Principal – Leonard Edlund**

Leonard Edlund has submitted his resignation as a principal in the Ajo Schools effective June 30, 2021.

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the resignation of Leonard Edlund as a school principal effective June 30, 2021. Mrs. Robertson seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **2. Issuance of Additional Certified Contracts for the 2021/2022 School Year**

The administration is requesting Board approval for the issuance of contracts to the listed teachers: Kevin Kmetz Jose Villasenor

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Mrs. Robertson made the motion to approve the issuance of contracts to Mr. Kmetz & Mr. Villasenor for the 21/22 school year. Mr. Guthrie seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **3. Approval of 2021/2022 Certified Contract Non-Renewal – R. Ranario**

Retchen Ranario has completed the initial 3 years of her J-1 work visa. She has decided to return to her family at the end of this contract year.

Mr. Guthrie made the motion to approve the resignation of Retchen Ranario effective May 27, 2021. Mrs. Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **4. Approval of 2021/2022 Certified Contract Non-Renewal – M. Potayre**

Mark Potayre has completed the initial 3 years of his J-1 work visa. He has decided to return to his home country after completing his 2020/2021 teaching contract.

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the resignation of Mark Potayre effective May 27, 2021. Mrs. Robertson seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **5. 2021/2022 Certified Employment - Shuchita Chaturvedi**

Shuchita Chaturvedi, has been interviewed for a vacant English Language Arts position for the 2021/2022 school year. Reference checks are in process.

Mr. Guthrie made the motion to approve the employment of Shuchita Chatuvedi for a vacant teaching position for the 2021/2022 school year. Mrs. Robertson seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **6. 2021/2022 Certified Employment - April Joy Caballero**

April Joy Caballero, was hired by the district in June 2020, but because of COVID travel restrictions was unable to come to Ajo. She has been re-interviewed for an upcoming position for the 2021/2022 school year. Reference checks are in process.

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the employment of April Joy Caballero for a vacant teaching position for the 2021/2022 school year. Mrs. Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **7. Approval of Spring Intersession Employment – 3/22-25/2021**

Spring intersession will be completed online. Spring intersession will be March 22-26, 2021. The administration is recommending the following staff for online teaching/tutoring: Carolyn Rodriguez – K-2, Alice Cadiz – 3/4, Mark Potayre – 3/4, Richard Rigodon – 5/6, Reylee Bermejo – 5/6, Emely Rosales – MS Math, Kevin Kmetz – HS Math, and Tamara Small – English/Lang. Arts

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the hiring of the above teachers to work during intersession for the corresponding positions for March 22-26, 2021. Mr. Guthrie seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **8. Classified Resignation – Custodian Worker – Alexis Gamez-Herrera**

Alexis Gamez-Herrera has submitted his resignation from his custodial position with the district. The resignation is effective immediately.

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Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the resignation of Alexis Gamez-Herrera's effective immediately. Mrs. Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

## **9. Classified Resignation – Paraprofessional – Valeria Chavez**

Valeria Chavez, who was hired by the Board as a teacher's aide at the November 10th Board Meeting, did not return after the Winter Break. Mr. Edlund has talked to Ms. Chavez and her new employment and she does not plan to return. No letter, email, or PAR was submitted for resignation. Ms. Chavez' abandonment of position was too late to include in the January Board Agenda and inadvertently left off the February Board Agenda.

Mr. Guthrie made the motion to approve the paraprofessional position abandoned by Ms. Chavez be declared vacant. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

## **10. Classified Employment – Maintenance Worker – Daniel Cotton**

Daniel Cotton has been interviewed and reference checks completed for the position of custodial/maintenance worker.

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to approve the employment of Daniel Cotton's as a custodian/maintenance worker. Mrs. Robertson seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

## **11. Classified Employment – Custodian Worker – Axle Gonzalez**

Axel Gonzalez has been interviewed and reference checks completed for the position of custodian/maintenance worker. Mrs. Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

### **b. Business**

#### **1. Approval of 2020/2021 301-Plan Amendment**

In response to ADE's announcement that School Grade will be postponed for the 2020/2021 school year, the administration proposed an amendment to the 301 Plan to the certified teachers. The plan proposes 6 monitored categories as a replacement to school grade. Teachers has approved this amendment 28/0 with 2 teachers not responding to the survey/questionnaire.

Mr. Hopkins made the motion to the teacher approved amendment to the 301 Plan for the 2020/2021 school year. Mrs. Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Noting no other business, President of the Board, Mrs. Duncan, adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

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Clerk of the Board

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Date